

**STATEMENT OF
CHAIRWOMAN JESSICA ROSENWORCEL**

Re: *Wireless Emergency Alerts*, PS Docket No. 15-91; *Amendments to Part 11 of the Commission's Rules Regarding the Emergency Alert System*, PS Docket No. 15-94; Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (March 14, 2024)

At the Oscar ceremony this week, *Killers of the Flower Moon* was shut out of the awards. But this film accomplished something that I think is more important than racking up wins in Hollywood. It opened our eyes to the troubling fact that violence against Native women has a long history. It affects us to this day. The cruel reality is that we continue to have a crisis of missing and murdered indigenous people, and it is especially acute for women and girls in Tribal communities.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs estimates there are more than four thousand cases of missing and murdered American Indian and Alaska Natives that are unsolved. According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the numbers missing are more than two and half times their share of the United States population. While there are new methods to collect data on missing and endangered Tribal and Native people, the true magnitude of this problem is hard to capture through data alone.

This movie gave voice to this crisis. Congress did too, when in 2017 it established May 5 as the National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Native Women and Girls. Then in 2018, Congress passed the Ashanti Alert Act, which directs the Department of Justice to work more closely with state and local law enforcement agencies to help find missing and endangered adults.

These efforts are vital. But I believe more work is needed to help address the crisis of missing and murdered indigenous people—and today the Federal Communications Commission is stepping up to do just that.

It was nearly three decades ago that AMBER Alerts were created. They tell us on television and on mobile phones when a child goes missing. So many young people have been safely found with these alerts. They demonstrate that there is a way to raise awareness when someone goes missing and increase the odds that we safely find them.

So today we propose a new code in our emergency alert systems for broadcasting and wireless that would sound the alarm when adults are missing and endangered, to help raise awareness and support recovery. This is critical, especially for the indigenous women and girls who are at special risk.

I want to thank the National Congress of American Indians for their work to pass a resolution to support the Commission establishing this new code. I want to acknowledge the efforts of members of Congress who have brought attention to this issue, including Senators Luján, Schatz, Daines, Tester, Murkowski, and Cortez Masto. Our work also owes a debt of gratitude to Native Public Media for bringing this issue to our attention. So a big thank you to Loris Taylor of Native Public Media who so said in letter to us “that by working collaboratively, we can make meaningful strides in addressing the challenges posed by the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons crises and enhance the safety and well-being of Indigenous peoples, and American people in general.” I agree. Our work here may not have the glamour of the Oscar ceremony, but it is absolutely essential because it can help save lives.

Finally, I want to acknowledge the staff responsible for this rulemaking including Alejandro Roark, Mark Stone, Aaron Garza, Wesley Platt, Dana Bowers, Theo Marcus, Bambi Kraus, and Cara Voth from the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau; Nicole McGinnis, Austin Randazzo, James Wiley, George Donato, Drew Morin, David Kirschner, and David Munson from the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau; Joy Ragsdale, Joycelyn James, Jamie Saloom, and Chana Wilkerson from the Office of Communications Business Opportunities; and Doug Klein, William Huber, Anjali Singh, and Erika Olsen from the Office of General Counsel.